

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Page 12, line 5; please delete the phrase "and data" after "data" (first occurrence).

Page 12, line 6; please change "ques" to --queues--.

Page 15, line 11; please change "preferably" to --preferable--.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claim 13 without prejudice towards further prosecution in a continuing or divisional application.

Please amend claims 1 and 14 as follows.

1. (Amended) A trade records information management system for storing, searching, and retrieving data pertaining to financial transactions, comprising:

a plurality of central data storage means maintained at a plurality of regional processing [center] centers, [the] each central data storage means [including] includes means for storing transaction data folders which contain bit mapped images, [relational database means for storing] ASCII information about the bit mapped images, [and means for storing] messages and completed inquiries;

AI a plurality of customer service units that are remote from each of the plurality of regional processing [center] centers, each customer service unit having local data storage means maintained at the customer service units, the local data storage means [including] includes means for storing transaction data folders which contain bit mapped images and [means for storing] messages and completed inquiries;

a wide area network connecting [the] each regional processing center with [each of the plurality of] at least one customer service [units] unit in the set associated with each of the plurality of regional processing units and connecting the plurality of regional processing centers together;

[gateway means located at the regional processing center, for linking the central data storage means with the local data storage means at each of the customer service units and linking the wide area network to other networks;]

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means for inputting data into each of the plurality of central data storage means from a plurality of sources, said means including means for creating and inputting bit mapped images of hard copy documents;

means for indexing input data in the central data storage means and creating said transaction data folder related to a particular transaction, each transaction data folder containing a unique identifier and [a] at least one bit mapped image file [containing the image] of at least one hard copy document wherein bit mapped image files of hard copy documents related to the particular transaction are stored in said transaction folder;

wherein the plurality of customer service units are divided into a plurality of sets, each set containing at least one customer service unit, where each set of customer service units is associated with one of the plurality of regional processing centers.

14. (Amended) A process of trade records information management system for storing, searching, and retrieving data pertaining to financial transactions[,] comprising the steps of:
preprocessing inbound paper-based documents including scanning the inbound paper-based documents [and];

indexing the inbound paper-based documents;

storing bit mapped images[.];

storing ASCII information about the bit mapped images [and];

storing messages and completed inquiries;

inputting data into a central data storage means from a plurality of sources[.];

indexing input data in the central data storage means and creating a transaction data folder, each transaction data folder containing a unique identifier and a bit mapped image file containing the image of at least one hard copy document, ASCII information about the at least one hard copy document, messages and completed inquiries.

Please add new claims 21-32 as follows.

21. (New) The trade records information management system of claim 1 further comprising:

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gateway means located at each of the plurality of regional processing centers, for linking the central data storage means with the local data storage means at each of the customer service units and linking the wide area network to other networks.

22. (New) The trade records information management system of claim 21 wherein the gateway means is comprised of means for converting image data to and from a stored image format.

23. (New) A method of managing documents and messages associated with a financial transaction in a system comprising:

scanning at least one paper document associated with said financial transaction to generate at least one bit mapped image of said at least one paper document at a first site;

transmitting said at least one bit mapped image to a first regional processing center;

retrieving said at least one bit mapped image at a local trade records information management system from said regional processing center;

indexing said at least one bit mapped image at said local trade records information management system;

creating a first transaction folder image at said local trade records information management system wherein said first transaction folder contains information related to said financial transaction including said at least one bit mapped image and said messages;

storing said first transaction folder at both said local trade records information management system and said first regional processing center; and

retrieving information within said first transaction folder from either said first regional processing center or said local trade records information management system.

24. (New) The method of managing documents and messages associated with the financial transaction in the system of claim 23, wherein any data input into the system by the first site must be routed to the local trade records information management system in order to be placed into the first transaction folder.

25. (New) The method of managing documents and messages associated with the financial transaction in the system of claim 24, wherein the first transaction folder is a new transaction folder created by the local trade records information management system.

26. (New) The method of managing documents and messages associated with the financial transaction in the system of claim 24, wherein the first transaction folder is a pre-existing transaction folder.

27. (New) The method of managing documents and messages associated with the financial transaction in the system of claim 23, wherein the information related to said financial transaction which is stored within the first transaction folder is further comprised of inbound fax messages.

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28. (New) The method of managing documents and messages associated with the financial transaction in the system of claim 23, wherein a user may access the first transaction folder at the local trade management information system when the regional processing center is off-line.

29. (New) The method of managing documents and messages associated with the financial transaction in the system of claim 23, wherein a user may access information within the first transaction folder stored at the regional processing center directly.

30. (New) The method of managing documents and messages associated with the financial transaction in the system of claim 23, wherein a user may transfer the bit mapped image in the first transaction folder into a second transaction folder.